



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Hampton Healthy Families: protecting the innocent is its mission

Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect presents awards to outstanding advocates

Richmond, VA — The Commonwealth recognizes April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, but for **Hampton Healthy Families Partnership**, protecting children is a year-round mission. The Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect Awards recognize Virginians who have exhibited a strong commitment to advocacy, protection, prevention, treatment and assistance. Hampton Healthy Families Partnership was among this year's honorees.

The Governor's Advisory Board (GAB) presented Certificate of Appreciation Awards to outstanding child advocates this year's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Conference in Richmond on April 2.

GAB awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Hampton Healthy Families Partnership, which offers innovative programs ranging from parenting education classes to child fairs, all designed to strengthen families, prevent abuse and neglect and promote school readiness. Hampton Healthy Families Partnership was one of only six recipients this year.

Since its inception in 1992, Hampton Healthy Families has provided services to more than 12,500 families, positively impacted the lives of more than 30,000 children, been influential in reducing the City of Hampton's child abuse and neglect rate by nearly 27%, and has contributed significantly to reducing the teen pregnancy rate and increasing the immunization rate for the city's children. Hampton Healthy Families Partnership is a multi-agency, public-private collaboration designed to make Hampton a healthy and nurturing environment in which to raise families.

"It is an honor and a privilege to recognize the men and women who champion the safety and security of our children," said Governor Timothy Kaine. "Their focus on prevention is especially critical."

Other Certificate of Appreciate winners included:

- a Chesapeake attorney who makes himself available 24 hours a day to represent the abused;

- a Prince William social services chief who creates innovative programs to help stop abuse before it happens;
- a Norfolk pediatrician who works to raise the standards for other physicians;
- an 80-year-old Virginia Beach woman who has been an child advocate for more than four decades;
- and a central Virginia lawyer who has represented more than 500 children

The awards and conference were sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia and co-sponsored by the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Family and Children's Trust Fund, the Child Abuse Prevention Committee and the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

For more information, go to:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

<http://www.preventchildabuseva.org>

<http://www.fact.state.va.us>

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/CitizenServices/ConstituentServices/Proclamations/2007/ChildAbusePrevMonth.cfm>

<http://www.hampton.va.us/healthyfamilies>

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.html>

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Interviews and photos available upon request. For additional story ideas and for information on how your media outlet can help raise awareness of child abuse, neglect and prevention, please contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov.

Attached are identified photos of representatives from Hampton Healthy Families Partnership: Allison Nelson, Brenda Snead, Teresa Morewitz and Debbie Russell.